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THIS IS AN INFORMATION REPORT, NOT FINALLY EVALUATED INTELLIGENCE

DIST 18 APRIL 1975

COUNTRY: LAOS

DOI: [REDACTED] APRIL 1975

SUBJECT: 1. DECISION OF SOUVANNA PHOUMA NOT TO CONVENE A CABINET
MEETING IN LUANG PRABANG; SOUVANNA'S VIEWS OF RECENT
CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS AND THE [REDACTED] CASE
2. REFUSAL BY KING OF LAOS TO SUMMON A COUNCIL OF
MINISTERS MEETING ON RECOGNITION OF THE PRG AND GRUNK;
HIS INSTRUCTIONS TO SOUVANNA ON CAMBODIAN AND SOUTH
VIETNAMESE REPRESENTATIONS IN VIENTIANE

1. ON [REDACTED] APRIL 1975 PRIME MINISTER SOUVANNA PHOUMA,

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(classification)

(release controls)

DECIDED NOT TO HOLD

A CABINET MEETING IN LUANG PRABANG AND INSTRUCTED MEMBERS OF HIS STAFF SO TO INFORM MEMBERS OF THE CABINET. SOUVANNA PLANS TO REMAIN IN LUANG PRABANG UNTIL THE END OF APRIL OR EARLY MAY AND DOES NOT PLAN TO SCHEDULE A CABINET MEETING UNTIL HE RETURNS TO VIENTIANE.

2. IN DISCUSSION WITH SOME MEMBERS OF HIS STAFF REGARDING THE RECENT CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS BY LAO ARMED FORCES (FAR) AND PATHET LAO (PL) TROOPS, SOUVANNA SAID THAT VIENTIANE SIDE FORCES HAD ATTACKED PL FORCES IN THE DAN SOUNG-NANYANG AREA AND THAT JOINT NATIONAL POLITICAL COUNCIL (JNPC) CHAIRMAN PRINCE SOUPHANOUVONG HAD DESCRIBED THE PL ATTACK ON FAR POSITIONS AT SALA PHOU KHOUN AS RETALIATION FOR THE FAR ATTACKS AT DAN SOUNG. SOUVANNA SAID THAT HE HAD ASKED SOUPHANOUVONG TO HALT FURTHER PL ATTACKS, ADDING THAT HE WOULD, IN TURN, STOP FURTHER FAR ATTACKS. SOUPHANOUVONG, ACCORDING TO SOUVANNA, SAID THAT HE WOULD TRY BUT COULD GIVE NO GUARANTEE.

AFTER WHICH SOUPHANOUVONG LEFT WITHOUT FURTHER COMMENT.

COMMENT: SOUVANNA HAS BEEN MADE AWARE THAT SOUPHANOUVONG HAS NO OPERATIONAL COMMAND OF TROOPS AND CAN DO NO MORE

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(classification)

(dissem controls)

THAN COMMUNICATE WITH SAM NEUA. WONDERING WHY SOUPHANOUVONG DID NOT ATTEMPT TO EXPLAIN THIS TO HIM, SOUVANNA LEARNED THAT SOUPHANOUVONG WAS PROBABLY NOT AUTHORIZED TO OFFER SUCH AN EXPLANATION. SOUVANNA ALSO LEARNED THAT THE REAL CAUSE OF THE PROBLEM IN THE DAN SOUNG-NANYANG AREA WAS THAT THE PL WAS THERE AT ALL SINCE SUCH FORCES HAD NO RIGHT TO BE IN THAT AREA, CLEARLY WITHIN THE VIENTIANE SIDE ZONE ONLY 19 KILOMETERS FROM VIENTIANE. SOUVANNA WAS NOT PLEASED BY SUCH A REMINDER.)

3. ON THE SUBJECT OF THE MISSING AMERICAN.

AND [REDACTED] SOUVANNA INDICATED THAT HE HAD ACCEPTED AT FACE VALUE STATEMENTS BY BOTH SOUPHANOUVONG AND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER P H O U M I VONGVICHIT THAT THE LAO PATRIOTIC FRONT (LPF) IN SAM NEUA HAD INVESTIGATED, DID NOT LEARN THE WHEREABOUTS OF [REDACTED] AND BORE NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MISSING PAIR. SOUVANNA, WHEN HE LEARNED THAT THE TWO HAD PROBABLY BEEN DETAINED BY THE NORTH VIETNAMESE (NVA), THAT THERE IS A REAL POSSIBILITY THAT THEY ARE DEAD AND THAT NEITHER THE LPF NOR THE NVA ARE WILLING TO ADMIT KNOWLEDGE OF THE MISSING PAIR, WAS VISIBLY SHAKEN AND SAID THAT SUCH WAS NOT POSSIBLE BUT THAT IF THE INFORMATION PROVED TO BE TRUE, IT WOULD BE TERRIBLE.

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4. ON 14 APRIL, IN A LETTER TO SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS TIANETHONE CHANTARASY, LAO AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S. KHAMPHAN PANYA INFORMED THE VIENTIANE SIDE COORDINATING COMMITTEE (VSCC) THAT DURING A PRIVATE MEETING WITH THE KING ON THE PREVIOUS DAY, THE KING INDICATED THAT ON 10 APRIL HE HAD DISCUSSED WITH THE PRIME MINISTER THE LATTER'S REQUEST THAT A COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING BE HELD TO DELIBERATE POSSIBLE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNION (PGNU) RECOGNITION OF THE PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT (PRG) OF SOUTH VIETNAM AND THE ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNION (GRUNK) OF CAMBODIA. ACCORDING TO KHAMPHAN, THE KING SAID THAT HE HAD REFUSED SOUVANNA'S REQUEST AND INSTRUCTED THE PRIME MINISTER TO ADHERE TO A POLICY OF STRICT NEUTRALITY BASED ON THE 1954 AND 1962 ACCORDS. THE KING, KHAMPHAN SAID, CITED HIS HAVING INSTRUCTED SOUVANNA TO REMAIN FIRM IN HIS POLICY TO EXTEND RECOGNITION ONLY TO THOSE GOVERNMENTS OCCUPYING THE CAPITAL CITY AND IN CONTROL OF THE POPULATION AND LAND CLEARLY DEFINED BY INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED BORDERS. REGARDING SOUTH VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA, KHAMPHAN SAID, THE KING SPECIFICALLY INSTRUCTED SOUVANNA NOT TO RECOGNIZE THE PRG OR GRUNK UNTIL THESE INSURGENT MOVEMENTS ACTUALLY OCCUPIED SAIGON AND PHNOM PENH. ON PGNU RELATIONS WITH SOUTH VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA, KHAMPHAN WROTE THAT THE KING HAD

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INSTRUCTED SOUVANNA NOT TO CLOSE THE LAO EMBASSIES IN SAIGON AND PHNOM PENH NOR REDUCE THE REPRESENTATIONS OF THOSE GOVERNMENTS IN VIENTIANE. ACCORDING TO KHAPHAN, THE KING REITERATED HIS INTENTION NOT TO ALTER LAO RELATIONS WITH SOUTH VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA UNTIL INSURGENT FORCES PHYSICALLY OCCUPIED THE CAPITAL CITIES.

5. COMMENT: EVEN THOUGH SOUVANNA DID NOT CONVENE A MEETING OF THE CABINET OR THE VIENTIANE SIDE DURING NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS IN LUANG PRABANG, HE DID INFORM CABINET MEMBERS FROM BOTH SIDES THAT THE KING HAD DECLINED TO CONVENE THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. THROUGHOUT THE FESTIVITIES, SOUVANNA DELIBERATELY AVOIDED SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION OF POLITICS.)

6. KHAMPHEN ALSO TOLD THE VSCC IN HIS LETTER THAT THE KING HAD AGREED WITH SOUVANNA ON THE DISSOLUTION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (NA) AND THAT ON 10 APRIL THE KING HAD SIGNED A ROYAL DECREE OFFICIALLY DISSOLVING IT. IN SIGNING THE DECREE, THE KING INSISTED THAT THE PGNU RESPECT ARTICLE 33 OF THE CONSTITUTION BY CREATING A NEW NA. BUT, ACCORDING TO KHAMPHEN, THE KING MADE CLEAR HIS PREFERENCE THAT THE TWO SIDES IN THE PGNU REACH AGREEMENT ON THE CREATION OF A NEW LEGISLATIVE BODY SEPARATE AND DISTINCT FROM THE JNPC. THE KING, KHAMPHEN SAID, RECOGNIZES THE SHORTCOMINGS OF THE JNPC, BELIEVING

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THAT TO CHANGE THE JNPC INTO A LEGISLATIVE BODY WOULD VIOLATE THE CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT AND PROTOCOL AS WELL AS THE CONSTITUTION ITSELF. THE KING TOLD SOUVANNA THAT THE JNPC HAS ITS ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS DEFINED BY THE CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT AND PROTOCOL BUT THAT THEY ARE DIFFERENT FROM THE NA'S OWN ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS DEFINED BY THE CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT AND PROTOCOL BUT THAT THEY ARE DIFFERENT FROM THE NA'S OWN ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES. ACCORDING TO KHAMPHAN, SOUVANNA ACCEPTED THE KING'S POSITIONS ON BOTH LAO RELATIONS WITH SOUTH VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA AND ON THE NEW NA.

7.

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